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DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION
DOT/CTS

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Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Administrator:

I am writing in support of Elizabeth Fisher's petition to amend Federal Regulation SEC. 571.209 Standard No. 209, Seat Belt Assemblies, Docket File Number DMS-NHTSA-2000-7580.

There are laws in 49 states and the District of Columbia that require seat belt use, yet there is no federal regulation that requires vehicle manufacturers to make seat belt assemblies that fit people who weigh over 215 pounds. What good are stringent safety requirements if we cannot fasten our seat belts?

On the NHTSA website there is an advertisement for the Buckle Up America Campaign. How can you encourage rigorous enforcement of state and local seat-belt laws when your own regulation seems to be based on exclusion of a significant portion of our population?

Because fat is more prevalent in certain racial and ethnic populations, more common in women than in men, and more common in older people than young, denying fat people the protection of being included within the limits of federal seat belt regulations disproportionately affects these disadvantaged groups. That's discrimination.

Please amend 49CFR571.209 to provide a means for large people to buckle their seat belts in vehicles they are riding in.

My husband and I went shopping for a new truck. We test drove a Chevy extended cab and the seat belt did not fit, I was amazed. I weighed about 280lbs at the time. This was a huge hit to my self esteem. We did purchase a new truck, but it was a Ford, I could at least get the seat belt to fit.

Sincerely,

Traci Aschenbrenner

